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PTO-892 (Rev. 03-98)

# **The Random House College Dictionary**

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**REVISED EDITION**

**Based on The  
Random House  
Dictionary of the  
English Language**

**THE UNABRIDGED EDITION**

**JESS STEIN • EDITOR IN CHIEF**

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## A DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE 1

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### REVISED EDITION

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se, or stop at an early or prema-  
lcraft or missile) to fail to accom-  
reason other than enemy action.  
scheduled missile flight before it  
cause to bring forth a fetus from  
is viable. 7. to cause to cease or  
ature stage, as a missile flight.  
ptp. of *aboriri* to disappear, mis-  
into being + *-tus* pp. suffix])  
, n. 1. destruction of a fetus  
an agent that causes abortion;

a (fə'shənt), adj. 1. causing abor-  
ter agent used to cause abortion.  
1. the expulsion of a human  
eks of pregnancy, before it is vi-  
3. an immature and nonvi-  
d or monstrous person, thing, etc.  
ment of an embryo or an organ  
te. 5. anything that fails to de-  
as a design or project. 6. the  
tion, etc., at a very early stage.  
] —a·bor·ation·al, adj.

ist), n. a person who performs  
1. failing to succeed; unsuccess-  
3. imperfectly developed; rudi-  
acting or intended to produce  
acting to halt progress of a dis-  
use of a disease) short and mild  
ced clinical symptoms. [*L*  
adv. —a·bor·tive·ness, n.

50/kar], n. Abukir.

1. to occur or exist in great  
*d abund in that brook.* 2. to be  
fol by in). 3. to be filled; teem  
brook abounds with trout. [late  
(to) overflow = ab- AB- + un-  
DULATE] —a·bound·ing·ly, adv.  
of; concerning; in regard to:  
a motif about Pasteur. 2. con-  
here was an air of mystery about  
re near: He is about the house.  
ss; about my height. 5. on every  
about the tower. 6. so as to be  
ut you. 7. on the verge or point  
about to leave. 8. here or  
about the place. 9. engaged in  
t. —adv. 10. nearly; approxi-  
ated miles. 11. nearly; almost:  
by; not far off: He is somewhere  
every direction; around: Look  
it. 14. halfway around; in the  
car about. 15. from one place  
that: to move furniture about;  
16. in rotation or succession;  
air play. 17. in circumference:  
adj. 18. moving around; astir:  
the rest of us still slept. 19. in  
Smallpoz is about. 20. Natu-  
a new course. [ME *abouten*,  
outside of (*on* + *b(e)* BY +  
(a) outside)]

literary command to face to the  
while standing. Also called,  
, a bout/fəs'; v. a bout/fəs/),  
1. a complete, sudden change in  
attitude, etc. v.i. 2. to turn  
itch to an opposite opinion, etc.  
v.i., -shipped, -shipping.

or to a higher place. 2. over-  
My brother lives in the apart-  
circled above. 3. higher in rank,  
the courts above. 4. higher in  
with 100 pages and above. 5.  
ok or other piece of writing: the  
w (def. 5). 6. in or to heaven:  
7. Zool. on the upper or dorsal  
higher place than; over: to fly  
quantity or number than; in  
ts of age. 10. superior in rank,  
captain is above a lieutenant.  
or capable of (some undesirable  
suspicion. 12. of too fine a  
13. in preference to: to favor  
th of: six miles above Baltimore.  
ove all, most important of all;  
—adj. 17. written above: the  
that which was written above:  
person or persons previously  
and trial. 20. heaven: a gift  
E abufan, onbusan (on + b(e)  
n above)]

-, bōrd'), adv., adj. in open  
se. [ABOVE + BOARD; so called  
the hands above the table  
go possible cheating at cards]  
, adj. situated on or  
8/vō). Latin. from the begin-

d. 3. abridgment.  
ab'dra), n. 1. a mystical  
in amulets, etc., as a magical  
une, harm, or illness. 2. any  
nonsensical or supposedly  
jargon; nonsense. [*L*] an abrasive.  
a·brad·ed, a·brad·ing. 1. to  
erode. 2. to scrape off. [*L*  
re to scrape] —a·brad'er, n.

## Abraham

A·bra·ham (ä/brah'äm, -ham), n. the first of the great postdiluvian patriarchs, father of Isaac, and traditional founder of the ancient Hebrew nation.

A·braham's bos'm, heaven, considered as the reward of the righteous. Luke 18:22.

a·bran·chi·ate (ä brāñ'kē īt, -ät'), adj. Zool. having no gills. Also, a·bran·chi·al (ä brāñ'kē īl). [*A-* + Gk *bránchias* (neut. pl.) gills + *-ATE*]

a·bra·sion (ä brāñ'zhən), n. 1. a scraped spot or area; the result of rubbing or abrading. 2. the act or process of abrading. [*< ML abrasiōn- (s. of abrāsiō) = abrāsūs*] scraped off (pp. of *abradere*; see ABRADE) + *-ION*]

a·bra·sive (ä brā'siv, -ziv), n. 1. any material or substance used for grinding, polishing, or smoothing, as emery, pumice, or sandpaper. —adj. 2. tending to abrade; causing abrasion; abrading. [*< L abrāsūs (us) (see ABRASION) + -IVE*]

a·bre·act (ä brē'akt'), v.t. *Psychoanal.* to remove by abreaction. [*AB- + REACT, modeled on G *abreaken**]

a·bre·ac·tion (ä brē'ak'shən), n. *Psychoanal.* the release of psychic tension through verbalizing or acting out an adequate resolution of a repressed traumatic experience, with the appropriate emotion or affect. [*AB- + REACTION, modeled on G *Abreagierung**]

a·breast (ä brest'), adv., adj. 1. side by side; beside each other in a line: They walked two abreast. 2. equal to or alongside in progress, attainment, or awareness (usually fol. by *of* or *with*): to keep abreast of the times.

a·bri (ä brē', a brē'; Fr. a brē'), n., pl. a·bris (a brē'). a brie (a brē'). a shelter or place of refuge, esp. a dugout. [*< F < L *apricum* (open place)*

a·bridge (ä brij'), v.t., v.i. a·bridged, a·bridg·ing. 1. to shorten by condensation or omission while retaining the basic contents: to abridge a long novel. 2. to reduce or lessen in duration, scope, etc.; curtail. 3. to deprive; cut off. [*ME abregge, abrigge < MF abreg(i)er < LL abrē*riare* to shorten. See ABBRiATE*] —a·bridg·able, esp. Brit., a·bridge·able, adj. —a·bridg'er, n. —Syn. 1. digest; synopsis, abstract, précis. 2. reduction, shortening.

a·broach (ä brōch'), adv., adj. 1. opened or tapped so that the contents can flow out; broached. 2. astir; in circulation. [*late ME abroche*]

a·broad (ä brōd'), adv. 1. in or to a foreign country or countries; overseas: famous at home and abroad. 2. Chiefly U.S. to or in Europe. 3. outside of a usual abode or shelter, esp. out of doors: The owl ventures abroad at night. 4. in general circulation: as a rumor. 5. broadly; widely; far and wide. 6. astray; in error. [*ME abrou*]

a·bro·gate (ä brō'gāt), v.t., -gat·ed, -gat·ing. 1. to abolish or nullify by formal or official means. 2. to put aside; put an end to. [*< L abrogātus (us) (repeated (pp. of abrogātare). See AB-, ROGATION, -ATE*] —a·bro·ga·ble (ä brō'gā bəl), adj. —a·bro·ga·tion, n. —a·bro·ga·tive, adj. —a·bro·ga·tor, n. —Syn. 1. cancel, revoke, rescind, void.

a·brup·t (ä brup't), adj. 1. sudden; quick and unexpected: an abrupt departure. 2. curt or brusque in speech, manner, etc.: an abrupt reply. 3. terminating or changing suddenly: an abrupt turn in a road. 4. lacking in continuity or smoothness. 5. steep; precipitous: an abrupt descent. 6. Bot. truncate (def. 3). [*< L abrup(tus) (us), broken off (pp. of abrumperē) = ab- AB- + -rup-tive + -tus pp. suffix*] —a·brup'tly, adv. —a·brup'tness, n. —Syn. 1, 3. quick, sharp. See sudden. 2. hurried, hasty, blunt. 4. broken.

a·brup·tion (ä brup'shən), n. a sudden breaking off. [*< L abruption- (s. of abrup̄tū)*]

A·bruz·zi (ä brōz'sē tsē), n. Duke of the (Prince Luigi Amedeo of Savoy-Aosta), 1873–1933, Italian naval officer, mountain climber, and arctic explorer.

abs', var. of ab-: abscond; abstract.

abs', 1. absent. 2. absolute. 3. absolutely. 4. abstract.

A·ba·sa·iom (ä bā'sā iōm), n. the third son of David: he re-

belled against his father and was slain by Joab. II Sam. 13–18.

A·ba·scam (ä bā'skām'), n. the code name for an FBI investigation (1979–80) of bribe-taking among members of Congress, in which government agents posed as Arab business- men and attempted to gain illegal favors by the payment of large sums of money. [*B. A(n)a + SCAM*]

a·b·sc·ess (ä bē'ses), n. *Pathol.* a localized collection of pus in the tissues of the body, often accompanied by swelling and inflammation and often caused by bacteria. [*< L abscessus (us) a going away, abscess, n. use of pp. of abscedere = ab- ABS- + ccessus (see CEDE)*] —a·b·sc·essed, adj.

a·b·scise (ä bē'sēz), v.i., -scised, -scis·ing. Bot. to separate by abscission, as a leaf from stem. [*< L abscis(us)*]

cut off (pp. of *abscidere*) = ab- ABS- + sciss- (from *cideō* to cut for caedere to cut)

a·b·scis·sa (ä bē'sēs'a), n., pl. -scis·sas, -scis·sae (-sē'sē). Math. (in plane Cartesian coordinates), the horizontal or x-coordinate of a point; its distance from the y-axis measured parallel to the x-axis. Cf. ordinate. [fem. of L (P, any point; AP abscissus (pp. of *abscidere* to cut off, or OB, abscissa of sever) = ab- AB- + scissus (scid- cut P; XX, axis of ab- apart + -tus pp. suffix)]

a·b·scis·sion (ä bē'sēshən, -sish'-), n. ordinates) 1. the act of cutting off; sudden termina-  
tion. 2. Bot. the normal separation of flowers, fruit, and leaves from plants, usually caused by the development and disintegration of specialized cells. [*< L abscissio-*]

a·b·scord (ab skōrd'), v.i. to depart in a sudden and secret manner (esp. to avoid detection or capture. [*< L ab- scordere* (to) hide or stow away = ab- ABS- + cordere to stow (con- + -dere to put; see no<sup>1</sup>]) —a·b·scord'er, n.

a·bs·ence (ä bēns), n. 1. state of being away or of not being present. 2. a period of being away: an absence of  
act, bē, dār, ār; ebb, equal, if, ice; hot, ūer, ūer; order; oil, book; ooze; out; up, ūrge; a = a as in alone; chief; sing; shoe; thin; that; zh as in measure; a in button (but<sup>2</sup>n), fire (fir<sup>2</sup>r). See the full key inside the front cover.

## absolute scale

several weeks. 3. failure to attend or appear when expected. 4. lack, deficiency, or nonexistence: the absence of proof. [late ME < MF < L *absentia*. See ABSENT, -IA] —Ant. 1. presence.

a·bs·ence without' leave', Mil. See A.W.O.L.

a·bs·ent (adj. ab'sent; v. ab sent'), adj. 1. not in a certain place at a given time (opposed to *present*). 2. lacking; nonexistent. 3. not attentive; preoccupied; absent-minded: an absent look on his face. —v.i. 4. to take or keep (oneself) away) = ab- AB- + -s- be (see is) + -em- ENT] —ab-sent-tion (ab-sent-tiōn), n. —ab-sent'er, n. —ab-sent-ness, n.

a·bs·ent·ee (ab'səntē), n. 1. a person who is absent.

2. a person who absents himself from his property, duty, etc.

—ab-sentee·ism, n.

ab·sentee bal·lot, the ballot used for an absentee vote.

ab·sentee land·lord, a landlord who lives in a place other than that in which his property is located.

ab·sentee vote', a vote cast by a person who, because of illness, military service, or the like, has been permitted to vote by mail. —ab-sentee vot'er.

ab·sent·min·ed·ed (ab'sent min'did), adj. preoccupied

with one's thoughts so as to be unaware or forgetful of other matters: an absent-minded professor. —ab-sent·min·ed·ly,

adv. ab-sent-min·ed·ness, n.

ab·sin·te (ab'sinh), n. 1. a green, bitter, licorice-flavored liqueur now made with wormwood substitutes and other herbs. 2. wormwood (def. 2). 3. U.S. sagebrush. Also, ab·sin·th. [*< F < L *absinthium* wormwood < Gk *apsinthion**] —ab-sin·thi·al, ab-sin·thi·an, adj.

ab·sit·o·men (ab'sit ə mēn); Eng. ab'sit 5'men), Latin.

may it bear no illomen. [lit. may one be wanting]

ab·sol·ute (ab'sə lüt), adj. 1. being fully or perfectly as indicated: an absolute correspondence between two parts. 2. free from any restriction, limitation, or exception: an absolute denial. 3. independent of any arbitrary standard; not comparative or relative: a search for absolute values. 4. utter; outright; an absolute lie. 5. unrestrained in the exercise of governmental power; without constitutional or parliamentary restraint: an absolute monarch. 6. positive; certain: absolute in opinion. 7. not mixed or adulterated; pure. 8. Gram. a. relatively independent in its syntactic relation to other elements, as *It being Sunday in It being Sunday, the family went to church.* b. of a usually transitive verb used without an object, as give in *The solicitors for the community chest asked him to give.* c. (of an adjective) functioning as a noun, as *poor in The poor are always with us.* 9. Physics. a. independent of arbitrary standards or of particular properties of substances or systems: absolute humidity. b. pertaining to a system of units, as the centimeter-gram-second system, based on some primary units, esp. units of length, mass, and time. c. pertaining to a measurement based on an absolute zero or unit: absolute temperature. 10. Educ. noting or pertaining to the scale of a grading system based solely on an individual's performance considered as representing his personal knowledge of a given subject regardless of the performance of others in a group. Cf. curve (def. 9). 11. Math. (of an inequality) indicating that the expression is true for all values of the variable, as  $x^2 + 1 < 0$  for all real numbers  $x$ ; unconditional. —n. 12. something that is not dependent upon external conditions for existence or for its specific nature, size, etc. (opposed to relative). 13. the absolute, a something that is independent of any restriction or condition, or some or all relations. b. (in Hegel) the world-process operating in accordance with the absolute idea. [*< L *absolutus* free, unrestricted, unconditioned (pp. of *absolvere* to *absolvē*) = ab- AB- + solv- loose + -lus pp. suffix*] —ab-sol·ute·ness, n.

—Syn. 2. total, unconditional; categorical. ABSOLUTE, UNQUALIFIED, UTTER all mean unmodified. ABSOLUTE implies an unquestionable finality: an absolute coward. UNQUALIFIED means without reservations or conditions: an unqualified success. UTTER expresses totality or entirety: an utter failure.

6. unequivocal, definite, sure. 7. unadulterated, unmixed. —Ant. 2. qualified. 3. relative. 7. mixed.

ab·sol·ute al·coh·ol, ethyl alcohol containing less than one percent by weight of water.

ab·sol·ute humid·ity, the ratio of the mass of water vapor to the volume of moist air within which it is contained. Cf. relative humidity.

ab·sol·ute ide·a, Hegelianism, the spiritual principle of

which the world process is the expression and fulfillment

ab·sol·ute ide·alism, Philos. any of various doctrines, esp. Hegel's, that reality is based on an absolute idea or principle.

ab·so·lutely (ab'sə lüt'lē, ab'sə lüt'lē), adv. 1. completely; wholly; fully: He is absolutely wrong. 2. positively; certainly. 3. (of a transitive verb) without an object.

—interj. 4. (used to express complete agreement or unqualified assent.) —Syn. 1. entirely, totally, unqualifiedly. 2. unquestionably, unequivocally, definitely.

ab·sol·ute mag·ni·tude, Astron. the magnitude of a star as it would appear to a hypothetical observer at a distance of 10 parsecs or 32.6 light years.

ab·sol·ute major·ity, a majority of votes representing more than half of those voting or eligible to vote.

ab·sol·ute max·im·um, Math. the largest value a given function assumes on a specified set. Cf. maximum (def. 2a).

ab·sol·ute min·im·um, Math. the smallest value a given function assumes on a specified set. Cf. minimum (def. 3a).

ab·sol·ute mon·arch·y, a monarchy that is not limited by laws or a constitution.

ab·sol·ute mu·sic, music whose patterns in sound are

not illustrative or dependent on a literary work, historical

theme, etc. (distinguished from program music).

ab·sol·ute pitch', Music. 1. the exact pitch of a tone in terms of vibrations per second. 2. Also called perfect pitch, the ability to sing or recognize the pitch of a tone by ear. Cf. relative pitch.

ab·sol·ute scale', Physics. a temperature scale in which zero corresponds to absolute zero. Cf. Kelvin (def. 2), Rankine (def. 2).

oil, book; ooze; out; up, ūrge; a = a as in alone; chief;

sing; shoe; thin; that; zh as in measure; a in button (but<sup>2</sup>n), fire (fir<sup>2</sup>r). See the full key inside the front cover.

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